

GEORGE H. ASH, MASTER BUILDER

By

LINDSEY P. HENDERSON JUNIOR

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Few men who left so great an impression on their day and generation are as little known as George H., Ash. According to Waring and Hartridge “In the Fifties sixties and seventies the most prolific builders were George H. Ash, Adam Short, and William L. Vroom. They were essentially skilled craftsmen who used the current plans and designs to be found in the building manuals of the time, but their adaptations of these to their clients’ taste and pocketbook as well as to the of the climate made them what we would consider architects, though they themselves would hardly have presumed to that status. They advertised themselves as ‘master builders’ or ‘master masons’, They were also speculative builders in that they often built on their own credit for sale or rental,”

George H. Ash was born on 25 May 1828 in Savannah, Georgia. He was the son of George A. and Eliza Gorham Ash. Little is known of his early life except that he “came of a family of builders”. (3) He is alleged to have followed in the footsteps of his uncle, John A. Ash (1792— 1822) who had “prospered in the building trade and been an honored citizen (Alderman, Deputy Marshall, Fort Warden) and who in turn had learned *bid* trade from his stepfather, William Burnside, carpenter.” George Ash’s brother in law, Edward J. Henderson (1828-1930) was apprenticed to him and also became a builder”(4)

George Ash built a variety of houses, Large and Small, Expensive and Inexpensive. They were all characterized by sound construction, fine brickwork and refined interior trim. (5) Some of his known houses are as follows:

128 East Taylor Street	1860
223 Jones Street	1867 (1866?)
220-22-24 East Taylor	1869
216—18 East Taylor	1869
206—08—10 East Taylor	1854
426 Abercorn Street	1855
313 East Liberty Street	1851—52 (6)

George H. Ash died at his home, 70 Taylor Street, 12 February 1885. (7) He was buried in Laurel Grove Cemetery, 14 February 1885, (7) He was followed by wife some thirtytwo years later, Her obituary follows:

"Mrs. S. J. Ash dies after long illness

Following an illness of several months, Mrs. Sarah 50 Ash aged 80 years died at her home, No. 218 Taylor Street East, this morning at 1:20 o'clock She was a native of Savannah and the widow of George H., Ash₀ She leaves a brother, Edward 5. Henderson and a nephew George H., Miller of Savannah. Four nieces, Misses Lilly and Elbie Miller of Savannah and. Mrs.. John Carpenter of New York (the name of the 4th niece not available) two grandchildren, Edward Ash Zverett and Mrs Walter Berry of Columbus, Georgia and three greatgrandchildren,, Funeral arrangements are incomplete.(8)

That is the life of George H, Ash, Master Builder whose fine buildings are becoming a legend in our time, a time of the resurgence of history and "Old Savannah". More could be made of the information available, but he and breathes in the gracious homes restored and being restored in Sairannah today. Thus it seems appropriate that we go further into the life of this builder who left so much for posterity. So, let us begin at the beginning as it is known and recorded.

Records of the Salzburger Society (9)indicate the following: "Matthias Ash crossed the Savannah River at Puryburg and took up residence at Ebenezer in 1734." The Royal Georgia Gazette and the Georgia Gazette make many to him, (10) According to Mrs₀ Thad B, Welch, in a telephone discussion, Matthias Ash had no children, On or about 1790, he sponsored, George Adam Ashbacher, his brothers son and brought him to Savannah,(11) tWhen George arrived and at approximately the time of his naturalization, he changed his name to Ash. (12)

George Adam Ash married Elizabeth (Eliza) daughter of _Joseph and Elizabeth Gorham of New Haven, Conn, in 1814 She died 23 November 1839 at age 45 Sometime after this, he married Susannah Burnsides, a Widow.(13) SUsannah Burnsides Ash (1824-1907) married Charles Braddock Patterson in 1838. They are buried in lot 651 Laurel Grove Cemetery. He died in 1858 and she died in 1907. (14) There son, Charles Braddock Patterson C181j5— 21920) married Annie Naud Lester (1851—1896)., Their son George Randolph Alice Sauls. Their daughter Thelma, Mrs Thad B. Welch is a source for this paper.

George H, Ash had a brother, John who moved to Oliver Georgia shortly after the War Between the States and became a Methodist Minister, and farmer His Grandson, George B, Ash has the original papers of George Adam Ash (bacher) and will make copies available to this writer. The gap discovered during the preparation of this paper causes many questions.

There is no question as to George H Ash's existence, Nor is there a question as to the buildings he left for posterity, The writer can find no fault with his family name being changed from Ashbacher to Ash as did his great great grand uncle Matthias Ash, the Salzburger. His marriage is recorded in the daily Morning News of 9 October 1851 to Miss Sarah L. Henderson by Rev., Conner on Thursday 2 .October 1851. However, it is thought expedient to check more thoroughly the gap that seems to exist between Matthias Ash, George Ash and George Adam Ash. When this is done, both the Salzburger line through Ash (bacher) and the Mayflower line through Gorham may be traced with impunity.

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NOTES

1. The Development of Calhoun Ward 1851—1900, Compiled by J.,F. Waring and Walter C. Hartridge 1968, para 6,a.,

2. Cemetery Records

Laurel Grove 1853 to present and Tombstones lot 404 in the Cemetery.

3. Note 1, para 6,b,

4. Ibid. para 6,b,

5. This writer has been active in the downtown restoration movement having assisted or consulted in over 146 restorations since 1945. During this time he has examined a number of the Ash homes and has done some consulting work in their regard.

6. Info from Mary K, Cast₀ Mathew Hogan bought the house in 1870 for \$5,000.00 It cost \$3,500.00 when built, Her source was Charles Perry, Perry Realty 26 July 1977

7 Laurel Grove Cemetery Records and Tombstones, lot 404

8. Savannah Morning News 12 February 1885, Obituaries, Microfilm, Savannah Public Library.

9, Salzburger Society Records, Mrs, Ernest Schuster Recorder, and Records of Mrs, Thad B. Welch, re same,

10. General Index to Savannah Georgia Newspapers 1763-1799 under "A"

11, Confirmed by Salzburger Society Records, Mrs. Thad B, Welch

12. Original Birth Certificate, Baptisimal Certificate, Naturalazation Papers and other family documents have been promised on loan by an anonymous member of the family.,

13. Something is wrong here, I must get with Mrs. Welch and Mrs., Schuster and go over the Salzburger and Mayflower Papers again, Also will recheck Lutheran Church Records.

14. Mrs., Welch is George Patterson's daughter., Tombstones in each of the following lots in Laurel Grove cemetery have members of this family,

Lot 404, 406, 226, 651, 853, and 301,

These have all been checked and rechecked by this writer,

Bibliography

Georgia Census 1850 Compiled by Mrs. Walter Otto in Georgia Historical Rdf. 929-358-c-0 (Chatham County) Gaston at Whitaker St, Savannah GA.

Census of Population (microfilm) 1820-1880 Georgia Historical society

Cemetery Records

Bonaventure	1850—Present
Colonial	1750-1850
Laurel Grove	1853—Present

General Index, Wills, Estates, Administrations, etc. Chatham County,

Georgia, Vol. I, A—K Ref.929,358 C—H Ga, Hist., Soc.

Marriages and Deaths 1763-1820, abstracted from Georgia Newspapers by

Mary B., Warreb, 1968 Ref. 929,358 G—W

Deeds; Superior Court, Chatham County Court House,

Newspapers Indexed, Ga, Hist. Soc. and Savannah Public Library (SPL)

1763-1845. Digested, Ga, Hist, Soc. (GHS) 1850-1855;1871-1875;1940-72

See also microfilms of Savannah Newspapers in HHS and SPL City Directories 1800,1866,1867—present GHS

Church Records: Lutheran Church of the Ascension

Society and Organization Records: Salzburger Society, Mrs. Ernest Schuster, End Road, Savannah, Georgia.

Society of Mayflower Decendents,

Mrs. Thad B, Welch, 1016 Welch Street, Savannah, Georgia

The Development of Calhoun Ward 1851-1900

Survey of Buildings Compiled in 1968 by J.F., Waring with Walter C. Hartridge,

Historic Savannah, Copyright 1968 by Historic Savannah Foundation Inc.

Vital Records: Chatham County Public Health Department, Eisenhower Drive.

Living Decendents: Known and talked with about this Biography are Mrs. Thad B, Welch, (see above), Children of Edward Ash Everett and Ma's, Walter Berry of Columbus Georgia (Great Grand children), and Mr. George B, Ash of Oliver, a greatgrand nephew. Only Mrs., Welsh was available to talk up to this deadline. The others will be followed and reported at a later date,

George H. Ash

George H. Ash, 57, died at his home, 70 Taylor Street, after a short illness. He was a native of Savannah and had lived here all of his life. He came from a line of builders, both in the field of politics and construction. He followed in the footsteps of his uncle, John A. Ash who had prospered in the building trade and had been an honored citizen of Savannah as well. He owned much property in Calhoun Ward and will long be remembered for the gracious homes, large and small, that he built for some of Savannah's citizens, there and in other parts of the city.

He is survived by his wife, Mrs. Sarah J. Ash, two sons, Edward G. Ash and Frank O. Ash, both of Savannah and a number of nieces and nephews, aunts and uncles.

Friends are invited to call at the residence. Burial will be in Laurel Grove Cemetery in this year of our Lord, February 14 1885.

This was the information available for an obituary. However, only a short funeral notice was published.

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